

REMARKS

Independent Claim 27 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error that does not affect the scope of the claim.

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 1 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combined teachings of the Akeel and Haaser references. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 defines the invention as an electrostatic painting apparatus including a bell applicator having a paint receptacle and that is movable to and from a docking position. A paint canister is provided in the bell applicator and is connected to the paint receptacle. The electrostatic painting apparatus also includes a paint filling station, and the bell applicator is movable relative to the paint filling station. Lastly, the electrostatic painting apparatus includes at least two paint injectors that are attached to the filling station. Each of the paint injectors is adapted to be connected to a different color paint. The filling station is actuatable to move each of the paint injectors selectively to the docking position along a docking axis for engagement with the paint receptacle for filling the paint canister with paint. Independent Claim 27 defines the invention as a method of using such an electrostatic painting apparatus.

The Haaser reference relates to a fluid dispensing apparatus for automatically dispensing high-viscosity fluids for mixing applications, such as the dispensing of different pigment concentrates for mixing inks and paints to have different colors. Thus, the Haaser reference is non-analogous art to the claimed invention and should not even be considered because it is neither (1) within the field of the invention nor (2) reasonably related to the particular problem that was being addressed by the inventor. Specifically, the Haaser reference is not within the field of the invention, which is electrostatic painting machines and methods. Furthermore, the Haaser reference is reasonably related to the particular problem that was being addressed by the inventor, which is how to reduce cycle time in changing from painting with one color to another. Accordingly, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not even consider the teachings of the Haaser reference when attempting to solve the problem addressed by the claimed invention.

Even if the teachings of the Haaser reference are considered, the claimed invention is not rendered obvious. The Haaser reference merely discloses that plural colors of paint can be dispensed from respective nozzles 200, 201, 202 into a container 72. In the claimed invention, each of the paint injectors is selectively moved to the docking position along a docking axis for engagement with the paint receptacle for filling the paint canister with paint. The Haaser reference lacks any teaching regarding this engagement of the paint injectors with the paint receptacle. Thus, independent Claims 1 and 27 are clearly patentable over the combined teachings of the Akeel and Haaser references.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard S. MacMillan", written over a horizontal line.

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